

1.9511

F 22

For Administrative Use

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

2

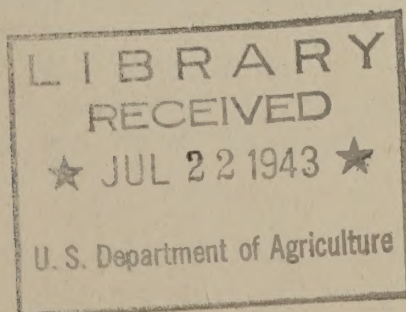
FARM LABOR IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

An evaluation of the present
farm labor program and the
farm labor outlook in the states
of Idaho and Oregon.

Prepared by

Labor Division - Region XI
U.S. Farm Security Administration. *Region XII.*
Portland, Oregon

July, 1943



CONTENTS

Page

1. Farm Labor in the Pacific Northwest

Prior to 1942	1
Since 1942	1

2. Idaho

Background	2
Change Came in 1942	4
Division of Agency Responsibilities, 1943	5
Grower Plans for 1943	5
Local Labor Recruitment	6
Housing	7
Needs for Fall, 1943	7
Summarizing the Labor Outlook	8

3. Oregon

The "Oregon Plan"	9
Development of the Plan	11
Direction of the Plan	13
Publicity	13
Sign-up of Women and Students	13
Mobilization	14
Placement	15
Transportation	16
Evaluation of Plan - 1942	16
Summary	18

4. Evaluation of 1943 Program - Idaho and Oregon

Functions of Agencies under Program	22
Piecemeal Approach to the Problem	22
Independent Determination of Labor Need	23
Public Confusion	24
Summary - Idaho and Oregon	25
Outlook	25

FARM LABOR IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Prior to 1942:

Prior to the 1942 crop year, the farm labor problem in the Pacific Northwest was a comparatively simple one; a surplus of year-round hired hands and seasonal workers for all crops confined the activities of various state and federal agencies charged with the farm labor program to housing seasonal workers and their families in the course of their migrations, and to placing the workers on the jobs.

Crops in which various operations afford high potential earnings have never, and do not now, except in rare instances, suffer because of labor shortages. Such has been the experience in the states of Idaho and Oregon in the years prior to the war, and during the 1942 crop season. The presently existing migrant stream is flowing into the areas of Oregon and Idaho, where potential earnings are high, by-passing the low-earning areas of both states.

JUL 22 1943

Specifically, the city of The Dalles, Oregon, is today literally over-flowing with migrants from out-of-state, attracted there by grape-vine reports that the cherry crop in that vicinity is unusually good this year. As early as March, growers, the Chamber of Commerce, and grower organizations received letters from workers in other states inquiring as to crop prospects.

As a result of reports of unusually good crop prospects and an increase in picking price of one-half cent to one cent per pound, the influx of workers as of today is so great that all available housing in The Dalles is filled to capacity and the population of the Federal Farm Labor Center this year shows registration of 281 and 428 for the first two weeks of operation as compared with 205 and 243 for the first two weeks of the 1942 operating season. Only 90 of the 428 registrants this year are foreign workers transported with government funds. This situation is merely illustrative of other like situations in the two states.

Since 1942:

Since the "defense" period, the labor supply problem has turned to one of manpower shortage, rather than the mere mechanics of housing and placement of seasonal farm workers. Those seasonal farm workers who have not been drafted or absorbed into industry are now "picking their spots", going to those areas and working the crops that offer opportunities for high earnings.

The first sign of a shortage of labor appeared during the 1941 agricultural season when the usually early migrant horde failed to arrive to harvest the snap beans in Marion County, Oregon. Through extensive

newspaper publicity, radio announcements, sponsored by the U. S. Employment Service and the State Labor Commissioner, and activities of civic agencies to recruit residents from surrounding cities, many volunteer workers responded for week-end work.

During the early spring of 1942, the shortage of labor became acute in the sugar beet areas of Idaho. However, the Federal Farm Labor Center at Wilder, located in an area of diversified farming and comparatively high earnings, attained early in the spring its normal population. The U. S. Employment Service met this situation, prior to the development of the Japanese Evacuee program, by mobilizing a labor force of local people not ordinarily engaged in agriculture through appeals to the communities to close business houses for a half-day to allow employees to assist with the farm work.

In the process of this mobilization, two types of workers were secured. The first type included those local residents who might ordinarily be used in seasonal work during short periods: school children, housewives, oldsters, and workers with part-time employment in the community. The second type which might be termed emergency labor included white-collar workers in mercantile and business establishments and professional men. Obviously, these latter people could be mobilized only for short periods and only after all other efforts to meet the labor shortage had been fully exploited.

Thus developed the first techniques of supplying manpower shortages in agriculture in the states of Oregon and Idaho. Subsequent developments and techniques used will be developed in reports of the labor outlook and evaluation of the programs in these two states.

IDAHO

Background:

The basic economy of Idaho is agriculture. More than one-half of the state's labor force is located in the rural areas. In 1940 the population of Idaho was somewhat over one-half million. The current population is slightly under one-half million. The largest city is Boise, the state capital, with a population of 26,000. Six other cities have 10,000 or more people. The non-farm population is 300,000.

The agriculture enterprise requiring the largest numbers of hired farm labor is located in the irrigated valleys of the Snake River and its tributaries in the southern part of the state. The bulk of the population is concentrated in these irrigated valleys.

The main crops with the highest labor requirements are sugar beets, potatoes, onions, vegetable seeds, lettuce, dry beans, and fresh market peas.

The total farm labor needs for specialty crops for the state as a whole are outlined below. This ranges from a low of 3,000 in August to a peak of 15,000 in October.

Idaho - Specialty Crop Labor Force*

<u>Month</u>	<u>Labor Force</u>
May	8,000
June	8,000
July	4,000
August	3,000
September	5,500
October	15,000
November	8,000

*Source: Labor Division, FSA Region XI Survey based on 1942 acreages.

The above figures are for the average number of workers. The actual number of workers engaged in the specialty crop harvest is considerably larger than these figures. Many participate in farm work for various periods ranging from a day to a full season. One of the main problems in securing an adequate labor force results from the unevenness of labor demands. There are two main peaks -- one in May and June, and the other in October. Labor requirements are relatively small in the in-between months.

Too, the higher wage rates in the other two states in the Pacific Northwest -- Oregon and Washington -- attract labor away from Idaho.

Hourly Wage Rates by States - Seasonal Average*

<u>State</u>	<u>Hourly Rate</u>
Idaho	45¢
Oregon	55¢
Washington	60¢

*Source: Labor Division, FSA Region XI Report based on Employment and Earnings Reports taken from Farm Labor Supply Centers in 1942.

Wage Rates without board as of January 1, 1943*

<u>State</u>	<u>Wage Rate</u>
Idaho	\$ 100
Oregon	112
Washington	118

*Source: Bureau of Agricultural Economics Farm Labor Report, January 15, 1943.

The sugar beet harvest requires large numbers of male adult workers. Relatively few women and children participate in this work. In the smaller towns it has been customary for schools to declare "spud holiday" in the potato districts in September and October. Thousands of school children are accustomed to pick potatoes.

However, the chief east-west artery to the Pacific Northwest passes through most of the irrigated areas in southern Idaho. In past years, thousands of migrants from the Northern Great Plains states have utilized this highway. On the way to the West a goodly number stopped to do farm work in the Snake River Valley. Even those who would eventually head for Oregon and Washington often stopped for farm work in Idaho.

Change Came in 1942:

In 1942 the movement of workers from the Northern Great Plains states - Nebraska and the Dakotas - virtually ceased.

The failure of these migrant workers to appear on the scene resulted in a serious labor shortage at the inception of the 1942 season.

The campaign to mobilize an adequate labor force was formulated and directed by the State Farm Labor Sub-committee of the State War Board.

These plans were transmitted to the county level through the county labor committees and translated into action by the United States Employment Service. The success of this campaign is attested by the fact that Idaho's sugar beet yield per acre for 1942 was the highest of any major producing sugar beet state.

Thousands of students and townspeople were mobilized to block and thin sugar beets. Stores were closed in all the cities in the sugar beet areas. It was also necessary to import Japanese evacuees for this work. During the fall peak it again became necessary to mobilize secondary labor forces and to bring in additional evacuees. Three thousand eight hundred evacuees were utilized for farm work in 1942.

In the course of the campaign, some 15,000 volunteers were mustered for farm work.

As housing facilities were limited, the FSA established 21 Farm Labor Supply Centers, where 5,000 workers were housed.

Division of Agency Responsibilities, 1943:

Although we are not in possession of a copy of an agreement between the two agencies involved, it is our understanding that the United States Employment Service will handle recruitment and placement of farm workers from its established offices and from the Farm Labor Supply Centers of the Farm Security Administration.

The Extension Service, operating under Public Law 45, is assuming responsibility for mobilization of the Crop Corps, Women's Land Army, and Victory Farm Volunteers, making surveys of labor need within the various counties and certifying as to the need for importation of labor into a county or area (whether intra or inter-state or foreign labor), operating camps to house intra-state labor, determining prevailing wage rates, coordinating the activities of various agencies engaged in the farm labor program, and the transportation and housing of intra-state farm workers.

Grower Plans for 1943:

Last winter and early spring, 1943, grower organizations and processors of Idaho and Malheur County, felt secure in their plans to use Japanese Evacuees for their labor needs. These plans were sponsored in the main by the three sugar companies operating in the state, the Amalgamated Sugar Company, the Franklin Sugar Company, and the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company.

It soon became apparent that recruitment of Japanese would fall far short of meeting the labor need for the spring and early summer work. Accordingly, the Farm Security Administration, under its then existing procedure, which called for certification of need by the Regional Director, Farm Security Administration, developed programs with processors and groups of farmers for the transportation of foreign workers into various areas of the state.

As of the present date (July 1, 1943) the Farm Security Administration has transported into Idaho 90 year-round hired hands; also, 1,186 seasonal workers as follows: Mexican Nationals - 655, Jamaicans - 453, Japanese Evacuees - 78. Approximately 1,300 Japanese Evacuees have been recruited and transported into Idaho by individual farmers and the sugar companies. These, together with Farm Security Administration transported workers comprise virtually all of the off-the-farm hired male adult help.

Local Labor Recruitment:

So far this year, with the exception of two or three areas within the state, little effort has been made to mobilize the secondary labor force within the state.

Last year this secondary labor force was used most effectively in the lighter crop work. As evidence of this, Canyon County was able to handle all its specialty crop farm work prior to fall harvest operations through vigorous mobilization of its secondary labor force and with what few migratory laborers there were who came into the county.

Population reports of FSA Labor Supply Centers are good criteria of farm labor migrations. Comparison of center population figures for an eight-week period in the spring of 1941 and 1942 indicates the decrease in migration into this area for the year 1942.

Average Weekly Population Farm Security Labor Supply Centers

<u>Location of Center</u>	<u>Center Population</u>	
	<u>1941</u>	<u>1942</u>
Eilder	410	190
Nampa	149	56
Caldwell	333	64
Harsing		26
Totals	892	336

Thus it appears that in 1942 with a reduction of 63 percent in the migrant labor supply based on 1941 figures, specialty crop work was done with this reduced labor force plus effective mobilization of local labor.

The record for 1943 tells an altogether different story. Recently in speaking of activities in utilization of local labor, the Chairman of the State War Board declared that an effort has been made to mobilize local workers for farm work "but not nearly enough".

Growers in the upper Snake River Valley, when faced with a strike of imported workers, were not concerned about the situation. In an article printed in the Salt Lake City Tribune, June 3, 1943, Preston Ellsworth, president, Idaho Beet Growers' Association, is reported to have said "no labor shortage was foreseen". In this same article, other association officials said that even if all the Mexicans quit, thinning could be accomplished because hundreds of high school students have been released for summer vacation.

In Gem County the County Agent certified to the need for one hundred fifty Mexican Nationals for the cherry harvest.

The June 26, 1943 Labor Market Report, War Manpower Commission, Idaho Division, contains the following statement:

"The cherry harvest in Gem County has reached its peak with all the workers they can use and a surplus in the nearby towns anxious to step in any time there is need for them. July 4th will see the cherry harvest all but completed."

It may be concluded from a recital of these facts that growers and government agencies have taken the "easy way out" in certifying to the need of transportation of workers rather than fully and aggressively mobilizing the local labor supply.

Housing:

In addition to recruitment and transportation of 1,186 foreign workers in Idaho, the Farm Security Administration (now War Food Administration Office of Labor) has provided housing and a feeding program for these workers as well as supplying these same services to approximately 700 other workers, mostly Japanese Evacuees.

The War Manpower Commission, June 5, 1943, reports as follows:

"The Farm Security Administration has provided an adequate camp program, supplying satisfactory housing for most of our migrant and imported help. Two permanent and nineteen mobile camps are in operation now, and others have been tentatively approved and will be established as the need arises."

Needs for Fall, 1943:

At the date of this report, substantially all of the sugar beet work is completed. There is some demand for hay hands and general farm workers, but since beet work is now completed in most areas, there is a small labor surplus in those areas. There will continue to be such surpluses throughout the state from time to time until the heavy fall demand for harvest work begins. The normal labor demand for Idaho has two peaks -- late spring and early summer (May 1 to June 25) and late summer and fall (September 25 to November 15). The fall peak demand is roughly about double that of the spring peak demand.

The Extension Service has conducted a survey of nine counties having a heavy labor demand. We do not know what method was used or how detailed this survey was. Based on this survey the Extension Service estimates that 3,000 workers will be needed in addition to those already on the farm and in the state.

Using FSA experience of previous years in housing migrant farm workers and taking into consideration the shift in crops from alfalfa hay and sugar beets to added acreages in peas, beans, and potatoes with the resulting effect upon type and number of workers needed, this figure appears to be high.

Summary:

The spring and early summer work has been completed without crop loss. Adequate labor to do the work was secured from two sources: (1) Japanese Evacuees recruited and transported by individual farmers and processors, (2) foreign and Japanese Evacuees recruited and transferred through federal agencies.

At present there are, in spots, labor surpluses. Spot labor surpluses will prevail until the fall harvest.

A need for transportation of additional workers into Idaho to meet the harvest labor demand is apparent. It is necessary that programs for the development of this need be evolved immediately so that a planned and efficient use of workers already available within the Pacific Northwest can be made and arrangement initiated for recruitment and transportation of additional foreign workers to fill the actual need.

OREGON

The "Oregon Plan"

The "Oregon Plan" in its essence is a plan to organize a farm labor force from those sections of the population which normally would not be engaged in agricultural work.

Such a labor force might be characterized as voluntary or secondary labor. This plan is similar to the methods used in the other two states in the Pacific Northwest - Idaho and Washington - for mobilizing volunteer labor.

The basic economy of Oregon is dependent upon agriculture and timber. Because of the seasonal nature of the timber industry, a considerable percentage of timber workers also engage in agriculture during off seasons of woods and mills operations.

In 1940 the population of Oregon was 1,100,000. Portland, the largest city, contains about one-third of the state's population, Salem, the state capital, has a population of 30,000. Five of the cities have a population of 10,000 or more. The present population of Oregon is materially the same as in the census year. One result of the shipyards and other war industries in western Oregon has been an even greater concentration of population west of the Cascade Mountains than was the case in 1940. The reservoir for volunteers consists of the non-farm population, 14 years and over - 700,000 people.

Total labor needs of agriculture in Oregon are outlined below. The number of hired workers ranges from below 11,500 in January to 56,000 in July - a five-fold increase.

Number of Workers Needed on Oregon Farms in 1942*

<u>Month</u>	<u>Total Workers</u>	<u>Family Workers</u>	<u>Hired Workers</u>	<u>Percentage Hired Workers are of Total</u>
January	69,000	57,500	11,500	17%
February	71,000	58,500	12,500	18
March	78,000	63,500	14,500	19
April	85,000	69,000	16,000	19
May	87,000	69,000	18,000	21
June	108,500	74,000	34,500	32
July	134,000	78,000	56,000	42
August	119,500	66,000	53,500	45
September	120,500	71,000	49,500	41
October	109,500	71,500	38,000	35
November	87,500	61,500	26,000	30
December	75,500	62,000	13,500	18

* Source: USDA Report, "Number of Workers Needed on Farms in 1942", by Martin R. Cooper.

The amount of labor required for the specialty crops is outlined below - most of this labor is hired.

Oregon Specialty Crop Labor Force
by Month*

<u>Month</u>	<u>Labor Force</u>
May	11,000
June	35,000
July	28,000
August	25,000
September	60,000
October	7,500
November	2,000

* Source: Labor Division, FSA Region XI Survey Based on 1942 acreages.

The figures above represent average numbers of workers. It is customary for thousands to work less than a week. Many work only one day - some just a few hours. Actually, the number of different individuals involved in the specialty crops harvest is probably twice as large as the above figures.

More than 100,000 individuals - exclusive of on-the-farm labor - worked at some time or other in the 1942 specialty crops. The work period for individual workers ranged from a few hours to a full season.

The crops and operations may be classed in relation to their respective labor force in the following manner:

Crops and operations requiring:

1. Virtually all male adult labor
2. Virtually all students, women and old people
3. Mixed groups of numbers 1 and 2

The crops and operations involved in this classification are listed in their respective labor composition groups:

1. Land preparation - harvesting sugar beets, processed peas, hay and grain.
2. Harvesting berries, snap beans, hops, nuts and miscellaneous truck crops.
3. Harvesting prunes, apples, pears, cherries, peaches, potatoes - thinning apples, pears, sugar beets.

The composition of the voluntary labor force is as follows:

1. Students
2. Housewives
3. Old folks
4. Workers in industry - service work
5. Office workers - clerks - merchants

Development of the Plan

Picking berries, cherries, hops and other crops is a long-standing tradition in western Oregon.

It was not at all uncommon to pick up the whole family as soon as school was out in May or June and leave for the harvest fields - returning in September as soon as the hops were picked. In many fields, particularly in the hop yards, a picnic holiday spirit prevailed. The "extra money" time had arrived. Children earned enough for school books, school clothes and sometimes a bicycle, etc. In the smaller towns, schools were closed in May and September, releasing children for picking.

During the years of large-scale unemployment in the '30's, unemployed and low-income people from the cities and countryside poured into the fields. Employables were dropped from the welfare rolls as soon as the berry season started. WPA workers were encouraged to go off the rolls and onto the farms.

Because some of the crops had short seasons but very high labor demands, there were at times labor stringencies. Large-scale publicity measures were utilized to mobilize volunteer labor to save crops. An example of such a situation may be seen in the case of the hop harvest in 1937 when the Governor and Farm Placement Supervisor broadcast appeals to save the crops.

In 1940 before there was a general labor stringency, strawberry processors in the Portland area and the sugar beet factory in Malheur County were afraid of a labor shortage. Arrangements were made whereby the Oregon State Employment Service recruited berry pickers and sugar beet thinners in the FSA camps in California. The processors paid for the gasoline used by the California migrants on their trip to Oregon. In 1941, berry pickers were again recruited by the OSES in California.

Large-scale mobilization of volunteers was undertaken in 1941 with the advent of the strawberry harvest.

In August that year, due to excessive rain, there was a very short picking season for snap beans, cucumbers, corn and prunes. Growers and the OSES organized an extensive campaign which at times bordered on hysteria to recruit volunteers to "save the crops".

Newspapers publicized the "shortage" and printed stories describing the high wages to be earned. The radio carried spot announcements appealing for additional pickers. Nearly every local news broadcast included a story on the "shortage" - and a call for pickers. A sound car roamed the streets calling for pickers. Trucks in Salem and Portland transported the volunteers to the fields. WPA projects not classed as defense jobs were closed down. State leaders of the Grange and Farmers' Union, accompanied by the State Farm Placement Supervisor, went to the A. F. of L. Labor Temple to secure pickers from among those awaiting assignment to industry jobs. All men in hangouts were given orders by the Portland police to find work in fields or orchards or face arrest on charges of vagrancy. Service groups urged their members to "save the crop". Many schools delayed opening from one to three weeks. Recruiting posters were displayed in stores all over the Willamette Valley. Slogans were stenciled on store windows. Placards were placed on cars. The Governor went on the radio appealing for pickers.

In Salem the Chamber of Commerce organized a closure of all business establishments. The clerks, office workers, merchants and professionals went to the harvest fields for the day. A few days later in Hood River (population 3,000) the stores closed so that all could pick pears.

On Sunday, September 7, 1941, the OSES, utilizing every possible channel of publicity, organized caravans - and hundreds of cars loaded with volunteers poured out of Portland to harvest prunes, beans, cucumbers and hops.

The 1941 experience in mobilizing volunteers in the Willamette Valley set the pattern for 1942.

The USES* formulated plans for an extensive, orderly mobilization of volunteers to handle the 1942 farm work. The Employment Service projected these plans through the Governor's Advisory Committee to the USES. Later this activity was formalized with a name - "The Oregon Plan". The favorable factors for the organization of the plan were:

1. The state as a whole is agricultural minded because of its basic agricultural economy.
2. Large numbers of the population have some measure of agricultural experience.
3. The highest labor demand crops are concentrated in the Willamette Valley - where the major portion of the state's population is also concentrated.
4. Most of these crops such as berries, beans, and hops need virtually no adult labor.
5. Students, women and old folks have in the past years made up a considerable percentage of the labor force for these crops.
6. Growers of these crops are accustomed to utilize students, women and old folks as pickers.

* The OSES has been changed to the Oregon Division, USES, in 1942.

Direction of the Plan

On the state level, the plan was directed by the Oregon Division, USES, working through the Governor's Advisory Committee.

Specific activities on this level concerned the organization of the farm work registration of women and students and arrangements for utilization of school busses to transport volunteer workers.

Virtually all other phases of the plan were directed on a county and community level. County USES managers - assisted by County Extension Agents - working through the county sub-committees on farm labor and the county agricultural war boards were supposed to give leadership in the counties. Actually, leadership was provided by the most aggressive individual with the time and interest to apply to the task. Often the USES manager was the leader. In some counties the County Agent directed the work - in others, civilian defense leaders, war board chairmen, managers of processing plants and traffic associations, chamber of commerce secretaries, etc.

On the community level, direction was sometimes supplied by leaders of farm groups - processors, school superintendents, chamber of commerce representatives, or other aggressive individuals in the community.

The elements of the plan are:

1. Publicity
2. Sign-up
3. Mobilization
4. Placement

Publicity

Publicity was to the effect that the normal labor force would not be on hand; therefore, volunteer labor was needed to insure the harvest of Oregon crops. The theme was patriotism.

Publicity was intense, wide-spread and continuous.

In Marion County, a three-weeks educational plan was formulated by the school authorities, county extension agent and USES manager. This educational plan went into the agricultural economy of the state and, in particular, the county. It included phases on how to harvest crops, what to wear, and even included a fashion show for harvest clothing.

Sign-up of Women and Students

In February, 1942, mass registration of women and students was instituted. The women's registration also included industrial as well as agricultural work. Prominent women's club leaders headed the work. Each county had a canvassing crew headed by a county leader who contacted most of the households in the cities and towns in the state. Thousands of women

signified their intentions of doing farm work. The student registration was made by the school authorities. The sign-up cards were filed in the local USES offices.

In several small communities, virtually every individual - male, female, old and young - was contacted and asked to sign up for harvest work.

A limited experiment in registering students was made in Salem at the behest of school officials. Several hundred students were signed up to work in platoons under the supervision of school teachers.

The women's registration proved to be ineffective as a means of recruitment. A better record resulted from the student registration.

The weakness of the registration was the long-time lag - at least three months - between the sign-up and the work call.

The main value of the mass registrations was one of publicity. Too, it helped to raise the morale of many farmers who were afraid of a serious labor shortage.

Mobilization

The one central mobilization plan - the winter registration cards - proved to be ineffective in most areas.

The various counties and communities worked out their own plans. The most effective mobilization techniques were:

1. Newspaper, radio broadsides - for all and sundry to report to the local employment office. This was the most common method used.
2. Organizations - club leaders called on members to volunteer. Sometimes the club members would pick in a group with earnings going to the club treasury . . . service clubs, women's groups, P.T.A.'s, Ladies' Aids, trade unions, etc.
3. Vacations - appeals directed to workers in industries, offices, stores, and merchants to take family harvest vacations.
4. Week end or part-time - appeals for city folks to take harvest week-ends, and for employed people to do several hours' harvest work after their regular day's work. Trade union channels were often utilized for this approach. This technique was used during special emergencies.

5. School closures - during the fall season, grammar schools and high schools were closed during harvest peaks. College students were given "leave" for harvest work.
6. Store closures - stores and offices shut down during peaks . . . sometimes all day, or half-day, or early shut-downs. Portland stores did not close.
7. Platoon system - originated in Marion County. Under this system about 50 workers, virtually all students, work as a unit under the supervision of a school teacher. The school teacher in effect acts as a foreman. She was paid \$5 a day by the grower who would ordinarily have had to hire a foreman or field boss. No child under 12 was permitted in these units. The usual age is 12-14. Mothers sometimes work in the platoons.
8. House-to-house canvas - often by air-raid wardens. In Eugene each city block had a woman captain who would mobilize workers on a call from USES managers.
9. Post-cards - usually mailed to those who signed registration cards . . . results none too good.

The various above-mentioned techniques were utilized in accordance with conditions in respective counties and communities. In the counties with very high labor demands, such as Marion County, virtually all the above-mentioned techniques were used.

The work performed by clerks, office workers and merchants as a result of business suspensions was slight. The real value of the closures was in its dramatization of the labor stringency; too, farmers were thereby kept out of town and did more work on their own places. And with town life at a standstill, the women, students, and old folks were more inclined to leave for harvest fields.

Placement

In those areas of a more rural nature, most volunteers arranged for their own jobs by going directly to the farmers. In some of the larger towns, volunteers would meet the growers at some pre-arranged location.

In county seats or other cities where USES offices were located, most volunteers were placed directly by the USES.

In Portland the USES arranged a pick-up route system in the suburban areas. Too, many volunteers with their own transportation went directly to growers on the outskirts of the city.

There were many hitches in the placement process. Volunteers reported at some designated location and would not be met by growers. Or busses and trucks would be loaded by the time they arrived at the designated pick-up point. Often growers would find no volunteers at the pick-up points. In Portland the Employment Service found it necessary to send their representatives to pick-up routes to arrange a more orderly placement.

In Salem platoons were dispatched by the USES in an orderly, systematic manner.

Transportation

Most volunteers had no transportation.

Large growers used trucks or school busses to transport volunteers from Employment offices, FSA camps, other pick-up points, or from the "end of the car line".

Small growers who had no transportation facilities were handicapped in securing volunteers. This was particularly true for those growers who were located in the more distant points from the cities. In a few instances, small growers solved their problems by organizing transportation pools. It was necessary to publicize the plight of the small growers in the outlying sections. Volunteers with their own transportation were requested to make particular efforts to reach these farmers. In Marion County, the county labor committee established a special committee for handling transportation problems. Platoons were transported in school busses.

Evaluation of the Plan

About one out of every seven individuals in the state 14 and over not already on the farm did farm work some time or other in 1942.

The Oregon Plan mobilized some 50,000 volunteers in 1942. About one-half of the specialty crop labor force of 10,000 was thereby mobilized by the Oregon Plan. These volunteers made an important contribution to the successful harvest of the 1942 Oregon crops.

Additional thousands were recruited to work in the canneries and other processing industries in the state. In some communities, as much as 75% of the specialty crop labor force was mobilized by means of the plan.

In Malheur County, however, the regular labor force and volunteer labor were inadequate to handle the harvest. It was, therefore, necessary to utilize 750 Japanese Evacuees. In fact, the Evacuees were the back-bone of the labor force in this county.

The plan was most effective:

1. In those crops that require virtually no adult labor, such as berries, snap beans and hops..
2. On large farms, when (a) growers furnished transportation, (b) or when housing facilities were available, (c) and when students worked under supervision.
3. In concentrated crop areas where FSA labor supply centers were located - such as in the Eugene snap bean area.
4. In crops where piece work rates were paid, and
5. When earnings potential was such that volunteers could make at least 35¢ per hour.
6. In crops requiring large numbers of adult males and where earnings potential were high. Volunteers in the Klamath Basin - Redmond potato area usually averaged 75¢ per hour.
7. When volunteers worked steadily for a week or more.

The plan displayed little effectiveness in mobilizing volunteers for:

1. Long-term farm jobs.
2. Jobs requiring a great deal of physical strength, such as haying, topping sugar beets.
3. Skilled farm jobs such as milking, tractor driving.

An outstanding weakness - in the operation of the plan - was the publicity exaggerating the earning potentials in the various crops. Volunteers sold on the exaggerated publicity were usually demoralized. And when the publicized earnings did not materialize, these demoralized volunteers soon became ex-volunteers.

Another weakness was the lack of nurseries. Large numbers of women desiring work in fields and canneries were unable to do so because of inadequate child care facilities. The FSA farm labor centers did provide nursery facilities, enabling many women to do farm work. Several attempts were made to organize nurseries; however, in only isolated instances were nurseries actually developed.

The first nursery to actually crystalize outside of the FSA labor centers was operated at Stayton, Marion County, Oregon during the bean harvest. The WPA was in charge. Twenty-two children were enrolled with an average attendance of 15. The age limits were 2-12. Businessmen's and Lions' clubs sponsored the nursery.

Summary

The Oregon Division, USES, launched its 1943 farm labor program at the State Advisory Committee meeting in January, 1943. The plans for 1943 were similar to the ones used in 1942.

Greater emphasis was to be placed on student mobilization and supervision. 1943 experience had clearly indicated that the effectiveness of students in farm work depended upon the degree of supervision under which they worked. The Advisory Committee established a Youth Participation Committee to better utilize students. The Marion County platoon system served as the model for student participation. The highly publicized 1943 women's registration was not repeated in 1943.

Many workers went into farm work from shipyards and other industries in late winter and early spring. This movement was a result of publicity regarding deferment of farm hands. Better farm wages also resulted in the transfer of industrial workers to agriculture.

Poor housing and inadequate transportation facilities caused a considerable number of workers to leave war industry for agriculture - more would have gone into farm work had more on-the-farm housing been available.

All the above movements were spontaneous. The USES assisted many 38-year olds (and over) in the Army to obtain year-round jobs.

However, outside of facilitating the release of 38-year olds, no campaign was put into action to recruit year-round workers and other skilled farm hands.

Because of the lack of large-scale efforts to mobilize year-round workers from within the state, the FSA transported 150 year-round farm hands into Oregon from Arkansas and Oklahoma.

During early spring, the USES and Extension Service arranged farm labor meetings throughout the state. State officials of the USES and the Extension Service reviewed the 1942 farm labor experiences. Charts were utilized to demonstrate the important role of local and volunteer labor in 1942. The chief function of these meetings, attended by many farmers, was to promote an even greater participation of volunteers for the 1943 farm work.

In the larger communities in the Willamette Valley, student groups were organized into platoons and other work groups during the winter and spring months. These organized student groups were the main labor force in the strawberry harvest. Because of bad weather, there was hardly more than half a normal strawberry crop. In contrast to past years, because of the organized student groups and the short strawberry crop, it was not necessary to make extensive calls for a mass mobilization of volunteers.

In Malheur County, there was only a limited mobilization of volunteers for thinning sugar beets. The Japanese Evacuees were the main labor force. A few student crews were organized. Instead of mobilizing volunteers to supplement the work of the Evacuees, the county labor officials appealed for transportees. Two hundred fifty Mexican Nationals were brought to this county. The 1943 record of volunteer mobilization was very poor compared to 1942.

In Hood River County, volunteers, mostly students, thinned a large percentage of the apples and pears in 1942. This year reliance has been placed upon 370 Mexican Nationals for this work. Mobilization of volunteers is virtually non-existent.

In the Dalles because of the large migration of California pickers to this cherry district, and because of the 100 Mexican Nationals, relatively few volunteers picked cherries.

In a few spots, adult male volunteers have been recruited for limited work in some crops. These mobilizations are being effected in a more organized manner than in 1942 - with much less publicity and fanfare. For example, in Linn County arrangements were made with a plywood mill for the utilization of 125 workers to help in the hay harvest. In Polk County the Extension Service recruited 65 soldiers from the nearby Army camp for cherry picking.

Relatively few women have been mobilized so far. The Women's Land Army has not as yet materialized.

There are definite tendencies among growers and some county labor officials to shy away from complete dependence on voluntary labor. The outstanding performance of the Mexican Nationals has resulted in requests to the FSA for Mexican Nationals from many areas where crops were successfully harvested in 1942 with a large percentage of volunteer labor.

In Josephine County, the County Extension Agent insisted that volunteer labor could adequately harvest the 1,000 acres of hops. The growers disagreed and ordered Mexican Nationals.

In 1942, volunteer labor was used most extensively in the central Willamette Valley, centering in Salem. At present, discussions are taking place regarding the utilization of Mexican Nationals for this area. There are already 150 Nationals harvesting cherries in the central Willamette Valley.

The situations and tendencies in the various counties and areas mentioned above indicate that growers and often Employment Service and County Extension officials are prone to utilize volunteer labor as a last resort. Apparently volunteers are to be used only to the extent that Mexican Nationals are unavailable.

Federal agencies have brought more than 3,000 farm workers into the states. The War Relocation Authority has released 700 Japanese Evacuees for Malheur County farms. The FSA has transported 100 workers from Mississippi and more than 2,000 Mexican Nationals into Oregon.

So far this year, volunteer labor has proved to be a smaller factor in the total farm labor picture than was the case in 1942.

EVALUATION OF 1943 FARM LABOR PROGRAM - IDAHO AND OREGON

In making an evaluation of the 1943 farm labor program nothing contained herein should be construed as criticism of any agency for failure to function in newly assigned duties and responsibilities in a field entirely new to it and foreign to its past experience. Further, to evaluate the results of an agency's efforts after only five weeks' operation would be unfair.

On the whole it can be said that so far this agricultural year the problem of farm labor supply has been adequately and satisfactorily met. Factors entering into this situation are: (1) The migrant stream, although considerably reduced, has been larger than anticipated and has contributed substantially to crop operations particularly in areas and crops that offer a high earning potential. This migrant stream is composed mostly of "professionals" or "stars", those who follow one crop or type of crop throughout the season, traveling from area to area and state to state "picking their spots" where crop conditions and wage rates offer a high earning potential. (2) Many farm workers have been deferred and men over thirty-eight demobilized. Seventy-seven percent of the 27,611 men deferred in the state of Idaho alone, or 21,669 men, are in agricultural and livestock work. ^{1/} Workers from defense areas, dissatisfied with high living costs, poor housing, and inadequate supply of certain foods in the more densely populated cities and further upon hope of deferment from military service have returned to agricultural employment. (3) The recruitment, transportation, and housing of foreign and domestic workers by the Farm Security Administration has proved adequate to meet all deficiency needs. ^{1/} (4) The use of Japanese evacuees in the Snake River Valley of Central and Western Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon. (5) Limited mobilization and recruitment of local volunteer workers.

In the period of confusion this spring when no overall program for supplying farm labor was in existence, the Farm Security Administration, in response to repeated and insistent demands from many growers and rural civic organizations and from sheer necessity that these individual and group requests be acted upon, met with growers and rural groups to discuss farm labor problems. As a result, this agency developed community groupings of farmers and processors and laid foundations for a program of supplying labor through importation of workers. Thus the spade work for, and, in fact, actual transportation of workers was accomplished by the Farm Security Administration out of emergency funds some weeks before the Congress enacted Public Law 45. The development work for substantially all the transportation projects now operating in the Northwest was completed or well advanced prior to the assignment of functions to Federal agencies under Public Law 45.

^{1/} Idaho Agricultural Labor Market Report, VMC, June 5, 1943.

Functions of Agencies Under Program:

An evaluation of the farm labor program would not be complete without reference to the confusion resulting from a division of responsibility between three different governmental agencies attempting to develop and operate what should be one program.

The program of the War Food Administrator set up in accordance with recently enacted Public Law 45 places upon one agency the responsibility for recruitment and mobilization of local labor, transportation and housing of seasonal intra-state workers, recruitment and transportation of year-round farm hands, certification of need for transported foreign or domestic workers, and placement of all farm workers.

This same agency has made arrangements on a state by state basis for the use of certain facilities and personnel of another agency to assist in fulfilling certain of the responsibilities relative to recruitment and placement.

Still another agency has been assigned responsibility for the recruitment, transportation and housing of out-of-state workers upon the basis of determination of need by the first agency as described above.

Piecemeal Approach to the Problem:

On paper this might appear to be a logical division of functions and responsibilities and an efficient operating procedure. But to those who have had experience with farm labor supply problems, who have lived with the program during the last two months, experiencing first-hand its inefficiencies, and seeing the flagrant misuse of manpower and waste of public funds, there appears a crying need for appraisal of the program and a correction of the procedure which brings conflict and duplication of function and responsibility as between governmental agencies.

This latter criticism is not aimed at any one of the agencies involved. Each agency is doing the best job it is capable of doing to meet its assigned responsibilities, while still looking out after its own interests.

This piecemeal type approach to the farm labor problem is inefficient and somewhat ineffective. By way of illustration: In the Pacific Northwest none of the three states has the same crop and corresponding labor pattern. In Idaho the labor demand peaks are in the late spring and late fall months; in Oregon the peak demand, except for strawberries and raspberries (which are low-wage earning crops and generally not attractive to adult male workers) falls between June 1-10 and ends about September 15; and in Washington the demand starts in February and builds up from July through October, with the high peak from September 25 to November 15.

In developing the transportation program, plans should be made for the first movement of workers to be progressively used throughout the northwest

region so they will be moved as little as is necessary, and will be kept employed as much of the time as possible. This planning requires that communities known to have a labor supply problem be visited, growers and grower groups or others interested in labor conferred with, surveys made of the labor need so that use of transported workers can be definitely agreed upon for the entire agricultural season well in advance of each move that the workers are required to make during the course of the season.

Visualize, if you can, an agency charged with operating a transportation program waiting in the spring of the year to receive advance certification of need for workers for use six or seven months later from a state agency operating in a state other than that in which the workers are located. The effort required to "coordinate" the functions of the two agencies to bring about the required results will call for the expenditure of excessive time and energy.

For example: The northeast portion of Oregon and the southeast portion of Washington require approximately 1,500 workers from June 1 to July 10. It is necessary, before the government can enter into contracts with workers guaranteeing them employment for a period of sufficient duration to justify their transportation from Mexico and return, to contract with grower groups for the use of these workers for the full agricultural season. In this particular case it necessitates the making, in advance, of contracts for employment of these 1,500 workers with three employer groups in three different areas within the region for three different portions of the agricultural year. Obviously, the agency responsible for recruitment must develop advance plans for the full-time employment of the workers or contract with them for only that period for which need for them has been developed at the time of recruitment. Frequently such planned use requires movement across state lines. Therefore, agencies set up on a state basis cannot perform this function unless their work and plans are "coordinated".

Independent Determination of Labor Need:

It is natural that an operating agency so conduct its affairs as to secure the approbation, at least not the criticism, of the community with which it comes in direct contact. Particularly is this true of an agency which derives part of its funds from local governments.

Farmers, like all employers, are prone to over-estimate their labor needs. It is, therefore, essential in the interests of conserving manpower and public funds and guarding against the evils of over or under supply that an independent analysis be made of the labor need of a community or area. Only by this means can any project for transportation of workers be administered so that neither a shortage nor surplus will be created through the transportation of too few or too many workers.

To secure determination of the labor need of a community uncolored by any agency which has employees permanently stationed in the community or by

an agency called upon to carry on the operating end of a labor transportation program in the community, an analysis of the total labor need based upon acreage, available on-the-farm labor, extent of local mobilization efforts to secure labor, and other factors should be made by an agency free from the influence of the community. Under such procedure, it can be assured that greater effort would be made to meet the situation locally.

To illustrate: A representative of a grower organization called the Farm Security Administration recently requesting that 150 Mexican Nationals be brought into the community. The representative was advised that the Extension Service was required to make certification of the need for transported workers and, further, that upon receipt of such certification, the Farm Security Administration would enter into a contract with the association for the transportation of such workers needed. The county agent certified to the need of "between 150 and 200 workers". The Farm Security Administration in the final analysis upon advice of its independent Labor Relations Division entered into a contract to transport 80 workers. Through a mix-up in transferring workers from one train to another, only 70 workers were dispatched to this community. This latter number has been sufficient to meet the labor needs of the community. In fact, weekly employment earnings reports of those workers transported show about 10 percent of the workers working about 90 percent of full time employment.

Public Confusion:

Under the present program there are three agencies that the agricultural employer must do business with if he wants to secure imported labor, much of the business being a duplication. This is not only indefensible in view of our manpower shortage, but adds fuel to the fire of criticism against over-employment by the government, makes for inefficiency in the operation of the program and causes confusion among farm employers as to the division of responsibility between agencies. That criticism in this case is justified; yet, each agency must maintain its personnel to carry on the functions of the agency.

There must always be a certain amount of discussion with employer groups in an area to develop a labor program. There are also further reasons to confer with these groups on operations of the labor program. Under present procedure the grower is required to meet or do business with three agencies in the development and operation of a labor program, particularly if transportation is involved. It is difficult for the farmer to understand why our government should require that three agencies cover what appears to them to be the same ground, having three different sets of personnel to meet and confer with over the same problem.

Further, because of overlapping responsibilities, agencies group together to make what sometimes is hoped to be final arrangements. Recently at such a meeting attended by the writer of this report who was there to negotiate agreements for a transportation program with the growers, there were in attendance five grower representatives and representatives of five

processors on the one hand and five representatives of one government agency, two of another, and the writer representing the operating agency; ten people representing the farmers and eight government employees. This is one example of the way the present farm labor program is operating.

Summary - Idaho - Oregon:

Operations by holdover governmental agencies prevented a complete breakdown of the farm labor program this spring. A reduced but still active migrant stream of farm workers is in evidence, particularly in crop areas where earnings possibilities are high. A substantial part of the off-the-farm work has been done by foreign and Japanese Evacuee workers transported with government funds and under contracts between farmer organizations and the Farm Security Administration.

The transportation of foreign workers has had the effect of minimizing the mobilization and utilization of local labor. Evidence has also been submitted at wage board hearings that local workers have suffered some unemployment because of the importation of foreign workers.

All crop operations have been cared for so far this year except in isolated instances. It is too early yet to evaluate the program for mobilization of local workers; such efforts so far have not contributed materially in their effect on the farm labor problem.

Outlook:

There is no critical shortage of farm labor at the present time nor is there likely to be until the fall harvest operations begin about October 1. A thirty percent reduction in beet acreage in Idaho will reduce the demand for beet toppers and loaders. The increased acreage of potatoes can be more readily harvested by older school children. The net labor demand should be slightly less in Idaho as a result of these two factors than in previous years. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to import between two and three thousand more workers into that state to handle harvest operations.

In Oregon the fall labor demands are not as great as in Idaho. Crop harvests can be completed with present labor supplies plus effective mobilization and utilization of local labor.

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK

THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
NEW YORK